



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/797,323	03/09/2004	Hirofaka Matsumura	82478-5600	4275
21611 7590 09/10/2007 SNELL & WILMER LLP (OC) 600 ANTON BOULEVARD SUITE 1400 COSTA MESA, CA 92626			EXAMINER TAKELE, MESEKER	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			2174	
			MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
			09/10/2007	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/797,323

Applicant(s)

MATSUMURA ET AL.

Examiner

Meseker Takele

Art Unit

2174

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 18 June 2007.
- 2a) ☒ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-3 and 5-13 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-3 and 5-13 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

1. This communication is responsive to the Amendment filed June 18, 2007.
2. Claims 1-3 and 5-13 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 3, 11 and 13 are independent claims. In the instant Amendment, claim 4 was cancelled, claims 1-3 were amended and claims 5-13 added new. This action is made Final.
3. The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

5. Claims 11 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Hirayama (US Patent No.: 7,124,172).

As to claim 11, Hirayama discloses, an inquiry processing apparatus (processing inquiry, see, col., 2 lines, 1-10) comprising:

a first providing unit configured to provide hierarchically arranged web pages to as requested by a browser terminal via a network (such as providing a web pages see, web pages on network, to introduce products to users, more particularly relates to a network system enabling a user to inquire about a product, col., 5 line, 33, col., 5 lines, 55-67, col., 6 lines, 36-41 and col., 1

lines, 10-15), the web pages including an inquiry page for entering an inquiry from the browser terminal relevant to content provided by the web pages and content pages (such as inquiry contents, we page, see Figure 5 and abstract) .

a recording unit configured to record therein a history of the provision of content pages to the browser terminal (example, such as inquiry information of users stored, customer request management computer 320 see Figure 3, Figure 1 (element 320) and col., 4 lines, 35-38)

a receiving unit configured to receive an inquiry entered into the inquiry page via the browser terminal (example, such as customer request management computer 320 receives inquiries from users input, see Figure 1 (element 320).

a specifying unit configured to specify which of the content pages has an inquiry button clicked to call the inquiry page on which the inquiry received by the receiving unit is entered (example, such as call me, see Figure 2A (element 315)

a responding terminal (example, such as customer request management computer 320, Figure 4 (element 320);

a second receiving unit configured to provide the received inquiry and information indicating the content pages specified by the specifying unit for display on the responder terminal used by a responder to enable responding to the inquiry based on knowledge of the content pages previously provided to the browser terminal, the responder terminal being different from the browser terminal (example, the response to the inquiry is transmitted from the customer request management computer 320 to the personal computer 210, display, output see col.,8 lines, 15-17 and Figure 1 (element 210)).

As to claim 13, Hirayama discloses, an inquiry processing method for enabling a responding terminal to display information relevant to an inquiry from a browser terminal (processing inquiry, display, see, col., 2 lines, 1-10 and Figure 1 (element 210)) comprising:

a first providing step configured to provide hierarchically arranged web pages to a browser terminal via a network (such as providing a web pages see, web pages on network, to introduce products to users, more particularly relates to a network system enabling a user to inquire about a product, col., 5 line, 33, col., 5 lines, 55-67, col., 6 lines, 36-41 and col., 1 lines, 10-15), the web pages including an inquiry page for entering an inquiry and content pages (such as inquiry contents, web page, see Figure 5 and abstract) .

a recording step of recording a history of the provision of content pages to the browser terminal (example, such as inquiry information of users stored, customer request management computer 320 see Figure 3, Figure 1 (element 320) and col., 4 lines, 35-38);

a receiving step of receiving to receive an inquiry entered into the inquiry page via the browser terminal (example, such as customer request management computer 320 receives inquiries from users input, see Figure 1 (element 320).

a specifying unit configured to specify which of the content pages has an inquiry button clicked to call the inquiry page on which the inquiry received by the receiving unit is entered (example, such as call me, see Figure 2A (element 315)

a second providing step of providing the received inquiry and information indicating the content page specified by the specifying unit to the responder terminal used by a responder for responding to the inquiry, the responder terminal being different from the browser terminal

(example, the response to the inquiry is transmitted from the customer request management computer 320 to the personal computer 210, see col.8 lines, 15-17).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

7. Claims 1-2, 5-10 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hirayama (US Patent No.: 7,124,172) in view of Fushimi et al. (US Pub. No.: 2004/0148232).

As to claim 1, Hirayama discloses, an inquiry processing apparatus (processing inquiry, see, col., 2 lines, 1-10) comprising:

a first providing unit configured to provide hierarchically arranged web pages to a browser terminal via a network (such as providing a web pages see, web pages on network, to introduce products to users, more particularly relates to a network system enabling a user to inquire about a product, col., 5 line, 33, col., 5 lines, 55-67, col., 6 lines, 36-41 and col., 1 lines, 10-15), the web pages including an inquiry page for entering an inquiry and content pages (such as inquiry contents, web page, see Figure 5 and abstract) .

a recording unit configured to record therein a history of the provision of content pages to the browser terminal (example, such as inquiry information of users stored, customer request management computer 320 see Figure 3, Figure 1 (element 320) and col., 4 lines, 35-38)

a receiving unit configured to receive an inquiry entered into the inquiry page via the browser terminal (example, such as customer request management computer 320 receives inquiries from users input, see Figure 1 (element 320)).

However Hirayama does not disclose a judging unit configured to judge, when the inquiry is received, whether any content page of a predetermined hierarchical level has been provided to the browser terminal, based on the history of the provision of content pages.

Fushimi from the same field of endeavor disclose a judging unit configured to judge, when the inquiry is received, whether any content page of a predetermined hierarchical level has been provided to the browser terminal, based on the history of the provision of content pages (example, such as, Upon receiving the catalog data, the catalog aggregator 3 judges the catalog provider who provided this catalog data (step S107), judging whether selected product catalog can be provided or not, see paragraph [0115] and Figure 12 (element S189))

It would have been obvious to one ordinary skill in the art to have modified Hirayama's processing inquiry at the time of the invention was made with judging as presented by Fushimi.

The motivation to combine to provide an electronic catalog aggregation apparatus capable of providing credit information of trade participants including a product provider and a product purchaser in relation to the catalog information such that a creditability of each trade participant can be judged efficiently and quickly, so as to realize a safe electronic commerce system.

Hirayama further discloses a second providing unit configured to provide the received inquiry and a result of the judgment to a responder terminal used by a responder for responding to the inquiry, the responder terminal being different from the browser terminal (example, the

response to the inquiry is transmitted from the customer request management computer 320 to the personal computer 210, see col.8 lines, 15-17).

As to claim 2, Hirayama discloses the inquiry processing apparatus further (processing inquiry, see, col., 2 lines, 1-10).

However Hirayama does not disclose checking unit configured to check, each time a content page is provided to the browser terminal, whether the content page is of the predetermined hierarchical level, wherein the recording unit records a result of the checking as the history.

Fushimi from the same field of endeavor disclose checking unit configured to check, each time a content page is provided to the browser terminal, whether the content page is of the predetermined hierarchical level, wherein the recording unit records a result of the checking as the history (example, catalog aggregator 3 has a management function unit 31 for realizing a management function such as a catalog checking, see Figure 47 (element 224) and paragraph [0087].

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to have modified the modified Hirayama's processing inquiry at the time of the invention was made with checking unit as presented by Fushimi.

The motivation to combine to provide an electronic catalog aggregation apparatus capable of providing credit information of trade participants including a product provider and a product purchaser in relation to the catalog information such that a creditability of each trade participant can be judged efficiently and quickly, so as to realize a safe electronic commerce system.

As to claim 5, Hirayama discloses wherein the predetermined hierarchical level is a lowest level of the hierarchically arranged web pages (example such as descriptions of products, requests for materials concerning products, and other content can also be given or made by accessing the homepages in many cases, see col., 1 lines, 21-29).

As to claim 6, Fushimi discloses wherein the judging unit is configured to provide a negative judgment if no content page of the predetermined hierarchical level has been provided to the browser terminal (example, negative judgment such as whether the catalog provider or the catalog user satisfies an examination condition or not is judged, examination (OK/NG), see paragraph [0112] and Figure 5(element S47)).

As to claim 7, Fushimi discloses wherein the judging unit is configured to provide a positive judgment if at least one content page of the predetermined hierarchical level has been provided to the browser terminal (example, positive judgment such as whether the catalog provider or the catalog user satisfies an examination condition or not is judged, examination (OK/NG), see paragraph [0112] and Figure 5(element S47)).

As to claim 8, Hirayama discloses wherein the responder terminal is configured to display the result of the judgment (example, such as display, output, see Figure 1, (element 210).

As to claim 9, Hirayama discloses further comprising a database configured to store the result of the judgment (example, such as computer 320 is a database for storing various more detailed information regarding the products, see Figure 1 (element 320) and col., 6 lines, 27-30).

As to claim 10, Hirayama discloses 333 wherein the responder terminal is configured to display the history of the provision of content pages to the browser terminal (example, such as

responding to a received inquiry from the stored data, display, output, see Figure 1 (element 210) and col., 6 lines, 36-40)

As to claim 12, Hirayama discloses, wherein the second providing unit further provides a content page arranged at a lower level of the content page specified by the specifying unit to the responder terminal (example, such as information providing system 300 arrange, see col., 13 lines, 31-35).

8. Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hirayama (US Patent No.: 7,124,172) in view of Fushimi et al. (US Pub. No.: 2004/0148232).

As to claim 3, Hirayama discloses, an inquiry processing method (processing inquiry, see, col., 2 lines, 1-10).

However Hirayama does not specifically discloses electronic catalog presenting apparatus.

Fushimi from the same field of endeavor disclose electronic catalog presenting apparatus (example, such as electronic catalog aggregation apparatus, see abstract).

It would have been obvious to one ordinary skill in the art to have modified Hirayama's processing inquiry at the time of the invention was made with electronic catalog aggregation apparatus as presented by Fushimi.

The motivation to combine to provide an electronic catalog aggregation apparatus capable of eliminating the catalog extraction, editing and delivery operations required for the catalog provider with respect to each catalog user and the catalog receiving and accounting operations required for the catalog user with respect to each catalog provider, so as to realize a fast and efficient electronic catalog system.

Hirayama further discloses a first providing step of providing hierarchically arranged web pages to a browser terminal via a network (such as providing a web pages see, web pages on network, to introduce products to users, more particularly relates to a network system enabling a user to inquire about a product, col., 5 line, 33, col., 5 lines, 55-67, col., 6 lines, 36-41 and col., 1 lines, 10-15), the web pages including an inquiry page for entering an inquiry and content pages (such as inquiry contents, see Figure 5) .

a recording step of recording therein a history of the provision of content pages to the browser terminal (example, such as inquiry information of users stored, customer request management computer 320 see Figure 3, Figure 1 (element 320) and col., 4 lines, 35-38);

a receiving step of receiving an inquiry entered into the inquiry page via the browser terminal (example, such as customer request management computer 320 receives inquiries from users input, see Figure 1 (element 320).

However Hirayama does not disclose a judging step of judging, when the inquiry is received, whether any content page of a predetermined hierarchical level has been provided to the browser terminal, based on the history of the provision of content pages.

Fushimi from the same field of endeavor disclose a judging step of judging, when the inquiry is received, whether any content page of a predetermined hierarchical level has been provided to the browser terminal, based on the history of the provision of content pages (example, such as, Upon receiving the catalog data, the catalog aggregator 3 judges the catalog provider who provided this catalog data (step S107), judging whether selected product catalog can be provided or not, see paragraph [0115] and Figure 12 (element S189))

It would have been obvious to one ordinary skill in the art to have modified the modified Hirayama's processing inquiry at the time of the invention was made with judging as presented by Fushimi.

The motivation to combine to provide the catalog aggregator 3 analyzes the catalog data provided from the catalog provider to analyze what kind of conversion processing is necessary in order to process this catalog data into the prescribed common format suitable for storing into the common catalog database 35 and extracts items necessary for the processing, because the quality of the catalog data can vary for different catalog providers and different occasions of the catalog data providing.

Hirayama further discloses a second providing step of providing the received inquiry and a result of the judgment to a responder terminal used by a responder for responding to the inquiry, the responder terminal being different from the browser terminal (example, the response to the inquiry is transmitted from the customer request management computer 320 to the personal computer 210, see col.8 lines, 15-17).

Response to Arguments

9. Applicant's arguments with respect to the amended claims have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

10. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the date of this final action.

Inquiry

11. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Meseker Takele whose telephone number is (571) 270-1653. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday 7:30AM- 5:00PM est.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Kristine Kincaid can be reached on (571) 272-4063. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

MT

Kristine Kincaid
KRISTINE KINCAID
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2100